



Email this article
Print this article
Most emailed pages

Click to send
Choose File Print or Ctrl P or Apple P
Today | This Week

State OKs speeding up 7 freeway projects

Bob Golfen

The Arizona Republic
Dec. 16, 2006 12:00 AM

Final approval to speed up seven Valley freeway projects was granted Friday by the State Transportation Board, giving the go-ahead to use \$193 million in state funds to move up the projects by as many as 14 years.

The construction and land-acquisition accelerations were recommended by the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Transportation as the most-important pieces of the Valley's Regional Transportation Plan to push ahead on its 20-year schedule. The MAG regional council, made up of the Valley's mayors, approved the list Wednesday and passed it on to the state board.

The state funding, called Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs, was authorized by the Legislature in June as part of the General Fund, the first time such money is being used on freeway projects. Statewide, \$307 million was approved to accelerate projects, with Maricopa County getting 60 percent, Pima County 16 percent and the remainder going to projects around the state.

The State Transportation Board has approved the acceleration plans for Pima County and the rural counties.

"All these projects will help ADOT tackle the challenges associated with being one of the fastest-growing states in the nation," said board Chairman Jim Martin of Willcox.

Maricopa County's total of \$193 million includes accrued interest, according to ADOT, and will be divided among these projects:

- Adding a third lane in both directions to Interstate 10 from Verrado Way to Sarival Road in the far West Valley, accelerated to a 2009 start date from 2023.
- Adding a third lane in both directions to Interstate 17 from Carefree Highway to Anthem Way, moved to a 2009 start from 2023.
- Adding HOV lanes in both directions to Loop 101 from Tatum Boulevard to Princess Drive in Scottsdale, moved to 2008 from 2011.

- Adding HOV lanes to Loop 101 from Baseline Road to Loop 202 in Mesa, moved to 2008 from 2010.
- Building a partial interchange for the future Loop 303 at Bell Road in the northwest Valley, moved to 2008 from 2011.
- Making road improvements on Cactus and Waddell roads for crossings at the future Loop 303 in the West Valley, moved to 2008 from 2011.
- Purchasing rights of way for construction of a Williams Gateway Freeway from Loop 202 to Ellsworth Road in Mesa, moved to 2007 from 2014.

"Placing these freeway improvements on a faster track helps address our transportation needs in the Valley and around the state," said Gov. Janet Napolitano, who supported efforts to include the STAN funds in the state budget. "We need to keep working on other initiatives that also will make a real difference in how people and commerce travel across our state."

Senate Majority Leader Thayer Verschoor, R-Mesa, who was last session's Transportation Committee chairman, has vowed to support an additional \$200 million in Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs funding to be included in next year's budget.

"That's going to take a lot of work and will include help from my seatmate, Andy Biggs, in the House," Verschoor said.

Biggs, R-Mesa, will be chairman of the House Transportation Committee, a post he also held last session.

Email this article
Print this article
Most emailed pages

Click to send
Choose File Print or Ctrl P or Apple P
Today | This Week